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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#)  
SUBJECT: MILITARY ATTACHES DISCUSS CONGOLESE SECURITY SECTOR

REF: A. A. KINSHASA 1072

[1](#)B. B. KINSHASA 1056

Classified By: Charge S.Brock (1.4 b/d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Military attaches and representatives from EUSEC, the UK, France, and the US met with the Charge and Timothy Shortley, Senior Advisor to the A/S for African Affairs, to discuss insecurity in North Kivu and the DRC's security sector limitations on September 13. All participants cited similar observations relative to the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC). The greatest challenges include implementing a peaceful resolution to the current hostilities in the Kivus between the GDRC and dissident General Laurent Nkunda, ensuring the disarmament / repatriation of the remaining FDLR cadres, and upgrading the operational capacity of the FARDC. End summary.

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Nkunda -- The Problem That Defies Solution  
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[1](#)2. (C) All participants in the discussion agreed that both Nkunda and the FDLR are intertwined elements of the current insecurity, but in the eyes of the Kabila government, Nkunda appears to be the most immediate threat. In addition to his superior military capacity (reftels), personal and regional factors enhance the problem. Nkunda is an excellent communicator. He has given interviews to numerous "serious" international journalists, including Anderson Cooper, Colette Brockman, and Reuters correspondents, and is building a Christian following in the U.S. among many influential Washington insiders which further complicates matters. His message is clearly articulated, and many privately agree with his major grievances -- marginalization of the minority Tutsi population, the plight of Congolese refugees stranded in third countries as a result of the war and FDLR occupation of Congolese Tutsi land, and the vulnerability of Congolese citizens to armed groups, which include the FARDC forces themselves.

[1](#)3. (C) MONUC estimates that out of a much greater pool of potential troops, Nkunda may have around 3,000 - 4,500 loyal adherents. Of those, around 1,000 are reportedly from Nkunda's own political party.

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FDLR: The Uninvited Neighbors Who Won't Go Home  
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[1](#)4. (C) The FDLR is the other side of the same coin. One of

Nkunda's primary grievances is the fact that the Rwandan FDLR troops and their extended families continue to inhabit Congolese territory. Not only do they threaten the local population, pillaging and plundering at will, but Nkunda also claims that they occupy the rightful lands of the Congolese refugees (many of them Tutsi) who fled the war in the late 90's.

¶5. (C) Of the estimated 6,000 - 8,000 FDLR members still living in the DRC, approximately 3,000 - 4,000 are located in North Kivu. The majority of the remaining FDLR members are probably not genocidaires, but many fear to return to Rwanda where some will doubtless be accused of atrocities committed during the Rwandan genocide. The genocidaires, on the other hand, do not want their non-implicated FDLR comrades to repatriate, which would leave the hard-core members more exposed to prosecution or retribution.

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FARDC Operational Ineffectiveness  
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¶6. (C) The common consensus is that FARDC does not have the operational capacity to win a military conflict with either Nkunda's troops or the FDLR. Although FARDC maintains a numerical advantage with approximately 10,000 troops currently in North Kivu, Nkunda's troops are much better trained, equipped, and disciplined than the majority of FARDC troops. (Note: Other sources have indicated that FARDC plans to deploy a total of 15,000 troops to North Kivu. End note.)

¶7. (C) The FARDC claims between 150,000 -- 180,000 troops nationwide, but members present at the discussion claimed that they have at most 120,000 personnel. The estimated number of "ghost" soldiers is between 30,000 and 40,000. When EUSEC has conducted censuses, up to 50 per cent of the soldiers on the books are not present. Census takers are told that the personnel are "at school" or "at other locations." The South Kivu Military Regional Commander reported that his subordinates send him different numbers of soldiers every day. Much of this is a relic of the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) process; if a commander joining the FARDC inflated the number of his troops, he received a higher rank. Additionally, it is widely alleged that commanders inflate their numbers to get more money for their troops -- and then pocket the difference.

¶8. (C) In addition, many aspects of the FARDC contribute to their own weaknesses. From the international perspective, the primary problem is one of weak leadership and minimal capacity. The current military chain of command is broken, brassage has not created the anticipated new linkages, and the entire army is exceptionally top-heavy with excessive officers and commanders. Military tactical operations are being directed at the highest levels, including by President Kabila, cutting out the operational chain-of-command. No planning process was undertaken prior to current operation, therefore no logistical support for current operations was provided. (Note: MONUC recently imported 65,000 MREs to feed forces in North Kivu. End note.)

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Possible Solutions  
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¶9. (C) The defense attaches agreed that there is no traditional "military solution" for either Nkunda or the FDLR. Nevertheless, most present stressed the need for additional international intel support (an implied request for US participation), in order to identify forces, locations, and capacities of each of these groups. Other suggestions included efforts to cut cell phone communication services to negative forces, to support communications interception, and to support PSYOPS operations.

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Comment

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¶10. (C) Both the UK and France are pushing for a "negotiated settlement" with Nkunda, after which the FDLR should be addressed. The DRC, however, remains adamantly opposed to "negotiations" with Nkunda. Other necessary elements include increasing international pressure on those countries supporting -- implicitly or explicitly -- both groups. Finally, specific individuals who act independently of any government, yet still provide support and materials, must be identified and held accountable. End comment.

¶11. (C) Mr. Shortley has seen and cleared this cable.  
BROCK